



TITLE:

Kant and the Cosmopolitan Design in Education

AUTHOR(S):

Hirose, Yuzo

CITATION:

Hirose, Yuzo. Kant and the Cosmopolitan Design in Education. Finding Meaning, Cultures Across Borders: International Dialogue between Philosophy and Psychology 2011: 143-147

ISSUE DATE:

2011-03-31

URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/143058>

RIGHT:

The copyright of papers included in this paper belongs to each author.

Kant and the Cosmopolitan Design in Education

YUZO HIROSE

Graduate School of Education, Kyoto University

Cosmopolitanism is sometimes criticized for its ignoring of individual and communal relationships in our particular lives. Strict cosmopolitans in the moral sphere such as Singer, O'Neil and Nussbaum claim that our duties to others should not be limited to local people or compatriots. Contrary to this stance, anti-cosmopolitans such as MacIntyre believe that there cannot be any obligations without close, communal relationships.

In this paper, I shall try to give some contribution to the above debate through Kant's cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan education by tapping its potential for the contemporary world. Kant's cosmopolitanism has three different dimensions: (1) Cosmopolitanism against egoism in the individual agent. (2) Cosmopolitanism as national character. (3) Cosmopolitanism as a feature of the cosmopolitan society, one which is considered to be an extreme case of a community. These three dimensions are interrelated with some historical connotations. Nevertheless we should pay attention to the first aspect of Kant's cosmopolitanism as an example of pluralism. In Kant's writing, it is illustrated by his geographical thought. According to him, history is the geography of time. In other words, geographical perspectives are based on historical terms.

How can such geographical thinking operate in cosmopolitanism? In response to this question, we need to take into consideration an educational aspect as Kant always thinks geography as an educational subject. Kant's cosmopolitan education can be considered to be an intersection with geographical and historical viewpoints. This feature of cosmopolitan education can prompt us to rethink how human being as a cosmopolitan being should be cultivated and what cosmopolitanism actually can be.

INTRODUCTION

During an intensive seminar at Kyoto University called 'one language, one world' by Professor Paul Standish (10-12 August 2010), the problem of cosmopolitanism was not mainly touched upon. Rather he focused on 'language', 'others', 'understanding others' and also 'multiculturalism' looked at a linguistic perspective. We cannot steer clear away of linguistic issues when trying to understand other cultures. However, when our starting point involves a discussion of language, it seems difficult to broach the theme of cosmopolitanism because there is no language that is not in some way 'local'. Therefore no language exists that might be thought of as 'common' or 'universal'. Nevertheless if we accept that the multicultural world is not static and fixed but active and fluid, then we cannot ignore the theme of cosmopolitanism. In other words, if we admit that the multiculturalists' approach favours openness, we cannot exclude the theme of cosmopolitanism. I think examining the concept of

cosmopolitanism can still contribute to an understanding of ‘others’ and ‘cultures’ in this multicultural world.

Cosmopolitanism is sometimes criticized for ignoring individual and communal relationships in the particular lives of individuals. Strict cosmopolitans in the moral sphere such as Singer (2002), O’Neil (2000) and Nussbaum (1996) claim that our duties to others should not be limited to ‘locals’ or ‘compatriots’. Contrary to this stance, anti-cosmopolitans such as MacIntyre believe that there cannot be any obligations without close, communal relationships (MacIntyre, 1995).

In this paper I will look at Kant’s cosmopolitanism because it forms the basis for recent arguments concerning cosmopolitanism and it also helps us to consider cosmopolitanism comprehensively. Kant’s cosmopolitanism is not static but is itself subject to dynamic movements.

UNIVERSAL COSMOPOLITANISM? FROM A KANTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Possibility beyond Local Community

Generally speaking, the word ‘cosmopolitanism’ (that etymologically combines *kosmos* and *polites*), takes us beyond the ‘local’. In this sense there is more scope for thinking about what it might mean.

We usually live in one nation or region, belong to it (of course there are some exceptions—some people are ‘stateless’) and spend much time in our local communities. Cultures and values in those communities are quite different and diverse. However, can we imagine values or thoughts which are not limited to one’s own community?

We know the parable of the good Samaritan from Luke (Luke, 10, 25-37). The help offered to the injured Jew could not have risen out of a ‘local’ attachment to values because Samaritan and Jew were traditional enemies. I want to allude to a real example of this in which goyim such as French, Belgian, Polish, Scandinavian, Japanese or German etc. risked their lives to help Jews during the Nazi era (Nussbaum, 1996, p. 131). Now, how should we consider such people? Are they strange and crazy human beings? To see things in this way is clearly unsatisfactory even though most of us would hesitate to be good Samaritans. In other words we have or are able to have an admiration for such actions. I am neither Samaritan nor Jew but I am nevertheless able to be moved by the actions of the good Samaritan or people who saved the Jews.

Needless to say, we cannot infer the existence of universal values from these examples. However, at the very least I think we can say that there are some values which transcend the local. Starting from this point, let us listen to what Kant has to say.

The Basic Nature of Kant’s Cosmopolitanism: To respect Humanity as an End and a Means

Unlike a number of contemporary philosophers Kant discusses elements of cosmopolitanism carefully. Examples of loose approaches such as Nussbaum's tend to uncritically associate cosmopolitanism with 'justice' (p. 5).

Kant's philosophy embraces the view that cosmopolitanism is not restricted to special matters or things. In other words it is not a means to an end because a means is always restricted by an end. In this regard cosmopolitanism should be seen as an end in itself. This notion of an end in itself suggests that a categorical imperative informs our actions. Karatani indicates that the second form of the categorical imperative especially helps us to think about cosmopolitanism as an end in itself (Karatani, 2003, pp. 128-130).

[Categorical imperative, second form:] So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means (Kant, 1996, p. 80).

Here Kant says that humanity must always be seen as an end in itself. At the same time we should pay attention to the fact that Kant does not deny humanity as a 'means' either. That is to say, we should deal with humanity both as an end and a means to an end. Human beings have a dignity as persons. When I respect myself I cannot avoid dealing with my neighbours as someone who can do something for me in reality. Kant is in a sense very realistic and therefore he never says that we should see humanity 'only' as an end. So, as we can see, cosmopolitanism is an end if we think of the categorical imperative as a form and humanity as an element. But in reality, humanity is also a means to an end. So cosmopolitanism is not the same as humanity.

Following Kant, it would appear that humanity is both a means to an end and an end in itself. Can an end become a means? I want to suggest that Kant's cosmopolitanism is not the same thing as the simple universal value that can be seen as an end in itself. It is more complex. Arendt perceptively notes that on the one hand in a Kantian context, human beings become the means to an ultimate end—pcosmopolitan society (Arendt, 1982, p. 77).

KANT'S COSMOPOLITANISM

Cosmopolitanism in three Dimensions

As we saw in part 2, cosmopolitanism can be seen in respecting humanity of the person both as an end and a means to an end. However, there is a contradiction in the nature of cosmopolitanism. In logic, there is a clear distinction between an end and a means to an end. Are there any other reasons why Kant thinks that humanity is not just an end but also a means to an end? Kant considers cosmopolitanism in three dimensions because it is not pure moral principle within individual: (1) the individual, (2) public society, and (3) cosmopolitan society. It is necessary to think cosmopolitanism in these three dimensions in order to consider how it might come to be. In this process, the individual is straightforwardly an end but he also becomes a means to realize the cosmopolitan society through public society.

(1) Kant describes the individual dimension of cosmopolitanism here:

The opposite of egoism can only be pluralism, that is, the way of thinking in which one isn't concerned with oneself as the whole world, but rather regards and conducts oneself as a mere citizen of the world (Kant, 2007, p. 241).

Cosmopolitanism is described here through thinking about individuals as citizens of the world. The citizen of a world that is cosmopolitan does not adopt an egoistic approach. It is curious that the opposite of egoism is not altruism but pluralism. What pluralism means is that when we think (or act) something by ourselves, at the same time we examine that thought (action) from other's position. Only in this process, we can make a categorical imperative by ourselves and follow it.

(2) We can find another cosmopolitanism which is grasped in the dimension of national or racial character as a sphere of public society. Kant writes:

The limitation of spirit of all peoples who are not prompted by disinterested curiosity to get to know the outside world with their own eyes, still less to be transplanted there (as citizens of the world), is something characteristic of them, whereby the French, English, and Germans favourably differ from other peoples (p. 441).

Here, the cosmopolitan literally lives beyond the artificial boundaries of nations and is at one with the spirit of the world. Kant shows how we can transcend narrow interests, egoistic action. Kant also implies that as cosmopolitans the French, the English, and Germans are different from any other peoples. The point is that cosmopolitanism is discussed in a dimension of a national character.

(3) In the end, cosmopolitanism has a mildly perfectionist quality.

In itself it [cosmopolitan society (cosmopolitismus)] is an unattainable idea but not a constitutive principle ... Rather, it is only a regulative principle: to pursue this diligently as the destiny of the human race, not without grounded supposition of a natural tendency toward it (p. 427).

INTERSECTION BETWEEN TELEOLOGICAL AND PLURALISTIC VIEWPOINTS: TOWARD COSMOPOLITAN EDUCATION

Now, I want to point out that though cosmopolitanism is thought in three different dimensions it is also understood in terms of 'connection'. Without improvement to public society, the cosmopolitan society can never exist. Also, without reforming an individual level there can be no public society. Moreover, the idea of cosmopolitan society is bound up with a 'regulative principle' (p. 427) which constantly affects

individual lives. So at first, the process toward cosmopolitan society can be seen as teleological: (1) the individual → (2) public society → (3) cosmopolitan society, but at the same time these three dimensions are mutually sustaining.

The cosmopolitan individual is always plural. When taking a pluralistic viewpoint, the human being can relativize himself in respect to the perspectives of other people and also in regard to other dimensions: (2) and (3).

Through thinking Kant's concrete cosmopolitanism, the problem of a means and an end is rearranged with the relationship between teleological and pluralistic viewpoints.

CONCLUSION

Cosmopolitanism in Kant's thought consists of teleological and pluralistic elements which contribute to cosmopolitan education. Cosmopolitanism is not a dogmatic and static idea but a regulative one that takes on bound pluralistic and critical viewpoints. Therefore it can be an *active guide* for us to communicate and understand each other. I think that pluralism can connect language with cosmopolitanism.

If we think something by ourselves, but simultaneously examine the thought from the other's positions, then we are in a pluralistic field. However, this is not sufficient because simple pluralism is capable of falling into relativism. Kant never abandons cosmopolitanism as an ultimate idea. This idea reflects the nature of cosmopolitan society emphasizing, as it does, 'peace' and 'happiness'.

How does cosmopolitanism as an ultimate idea appear in reality? Through discussion with others? My temporary answer is yes and no. Without discussion and relation with others, we cannot think the plural. However, we need more in order to 'share' cosmopolitanism as 'an ultimate idea'. Can religion help here? This problem may take away from Kant, though it might help us to think through the issue discussed in this paper.

REFERENCES

- Arendt, H. (1982) *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press).
- Kant, I. (1996) *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Practical Philosophy*, trans. M. J. Gregor (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Kant, I. (2007) *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Anthropology, History, and Education*, trans. R. B. Loudon (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Karatani, K. (2003) *Transcritique On Kant and Marx*, trans. S. Kosho (Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press).
- MacIntyre, A. (1995) 'Is Patriotism Virtue?' in: R. Beiner (ed.) *Theorizing Citizenship* (Albany, State University of New York Press), pp.209-228
- Nussbaum, M. (1996) *For Love of Country?: Debating the Limits of Patriotism* (Boston, Beacon Press).
- O'Neill, O. (2000) *Bounds of Justice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Singer, P. (2002) *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (New Haven, Yale University Press).

